

SECRETS OF THE SELF

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY IQBAL

'That experience should take place in finite centres and should wear the form of finite this-ness is in the end inexplicable.' These are the words of Prof. Bradley. But starting with these inexplicable centres of experience, he ends in a unity which he calls Absolute and in which the finite centres lose their finiteness and distinctness. According to him, therefore, the finite centre is only an appearance. The test of reality, in his opinion is all-inclusiveness; and since all finiteness is 'infected with relativity,' it follows that the latter is a mere illusion. To my mind, this inexplicable finite centre of experience is the fundamental fact of the universe. All life is individual; there is no such thing as universal life. God himself is an individual: He is the most unique individual.¹ The universe, as Dr. McTaggart says, is an association of individuals; but we must add that the orderliness and adjustment which we find in this association is not eternally achieved and complete in itself. It is the result of instinctive or conscious effort. We are gradually travelling from chaos to cosmos and are helpers in this achievement. Nor are the members of the association fixed; new members are ever coming to birth to co-operate in the great task. Thus the universe is not a completed act: it is still in the course of formation. There can be no complete truth

¹ This view was held by the orthodox Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in its extreme (anthropomorphic) form.

about the universe, for the universe has not yet become 'whole.' The process of creation is still going on, and man too takes his share in it, inasmuch as he helps to bring order into at least a portion of the chaos. The Quran indicates the possibility of other creators than God. (Quran, ch. 23. v. 14: "Blessed is God, the best of those who create.")

Obviously this view of man and the universe is opposed to that of the English Neo-Hegelians as well as to all forms of pantheistic Sufism which regard absorption in a universal life or soul as the final aim and salvation of man. The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique. The Prophet said, '*Takhallaqu bi-akhlaq Allah*,' 'Create in yourselves the attributes of God.' Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique Individual. What then is life? It is individual: its highest form, so far, is the ego (*khudi*) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre. Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself.² The

² Maulana Rumi has very beautifully expressed this idea. The Prophet, when a little boy, was once lost in the desert. His nurse Halima was almost beside herself with grief but while roaming the desert in search of the boy she heard a voice saying:

true person not only absorbs the world of matter by mastering it; he absorbs God Himself into his ego by assimilating Divine attributes. Life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continual creation of desires and ideals, and for the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, *e.g.*, senses, intellect, etc., which help it to assimilate obstructions. The greatest obstacle in the way of life is matter, Nature; yet Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves.

The ego attains to freedom by the removal of all observations in its way. It is partly free, partly determined³, and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual, who is most free—God. In one word, life is an endeavour for freedom.

The ego and continuation of personality

In man the centre of life becomes an ego or person. Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained. If the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue. Since personality, or the state of tension, is the most valuable achievement of man, he should see that he does not revert to a state of relaxation. That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal. Thus the idea of personality gives us a standard of value: it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art,⁴

'Do not grieve he will not be lost to thee;
Nay, the whole world will be lost in him.'

The true individual cannot be lost in the world; it is the world that is lost in him. I go a step further and say, prefixing a new half-verse to a hemistich of Rumi:

In his will that which God wills becomes
lost;
'How shall a man believe this saying?'

³ According to the saying of the Prophet, "The true Faith is between predestination and free-will."

⁴ The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must

religion, and ethics must be judged from the stand-point of personality. My criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal—systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely, matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it.

As in connexion with the question of the freedom of the ego we have to face the problem of matter, similarly in connexion with its immortality we have to face the problem of time. Bergson has taught us that time is not an infinite line (in the spatial sense of the word 'line') through which we must pass whether we wish it or not. This idea of time is adulterated. Pure time has no length. Personal immortality is an aspiration: you can have it if you make an effort to achieve it. It depends on our adopting, in this life modes of thought and activity which tend to maintain the state of tension. Buddhism, Persian Sufism and allied forms of ethics will not serve our purpose. But they are not wholly useless, because after periods of great activity we need opiates, narcotics, for some time. These forms of thought and action are like nights in the days of life. Thus, if our activity is directed towards the maintenance of a state of tension, the shock of death is not likely to affect it. After death there may be an interval of relaxation, as the Quran speaks of a *barzakh*, or intermediate state, which, in the case of some individuals, will last until the Day of Resurrection (Quran, ch. 23, v. 102). Only those egos will survive this state of relaxation who have taken good care

be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and braves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to reality around, on the mastery of which alone Life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power. ('Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry' in *The New Era*, 1916, p. 251)

during the present life. Although life abhors repetition in its evolution, yet on Bergson's principles the resurrection of the body too, as Wildon Carr says, is quite possible. By breaking up time into moments we spatialise it and then find difficulty in getting over it. The true nature of time is reached when we look into our deeper self. Real time is life itself which can preserve itself by maintaining that particular state of tension (personality) which it has so far achieved. We are subject to time so long as we look upon time as something spatial. Spatialised time is a fetter which life has forged for itself in order to assimilate the present environment. In reality we are timeless, and it is possible to realise our timelessness even in this life. This revelation, however, can be momentary only.

The education of the ego

The ego is fortified by love. This word is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realise them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realise the most unique individuality individualises the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker. As love fortifies the ego, asking weakens it. All that is achieved without personal effort comes under *asking*. The son of a rich man who inherits his father's wealth is an 'asker,' or beggar; so is every one who thinks the thoughts of others. Thus, in order to fortify the ego we should cultivate love, *i.e.* the power of assimilative action, and avoid all forms of 'asking, *i.e.* inaction. The lesson of assimilative action is given by the life of the Prophet, at least to a Mohammedan. In another part of the poem I have hinted at the general principles of Muslim ethics and have tried to reveal their meaning in connexion with the idea of personality. The ego in its movement towards uniqueness has to pass through three stages:

(a) Obedience to the Law

(b) Self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or ego-hood

(c) Divine vicegerency

This divine vicegerency is the third and last stage of human development on earth. The vicegerent is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest ego, the goal of humanity,⁵ the acme of life both in mind and body; in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony. This highest power is united in him with the highest knowledge. In his life, thought and action, instinct and reason, become one. He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful evolution are justified because he is to come at the end. He is the real ruler of mankind; his kingdom is the kingdom of God on earth. Out of the richness of his nature he lavishes the wealth of life on others, and brings them nearer and nearer to himself. The more we advance in evolution, the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are raising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere ideal; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents. Thus the Kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual possible on this earth. Nietzsche had a glimpse of this ideal race, but his atheism and aristocratic prejudices marred his whole conception."⁶

⁵ Man already possesses the germ of vicegerency as God says in the Quran (ch. 2. v. 28): "Lo! I will appoint a *khalifa* (vicegerent) on the earth."

⁶ Nicholson's Note—Writing of 'Muslim Democracy' in *The New Era*, 1916, p. 251, Iqbal says: "The Democracy of Europe—overshadowed by socialistic agitation and anarchical fear—originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, abhors this 'rule of the herd' and, hopeless of the plebeian, he bases all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of Supermen. But is the plebeian so

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But yester-eve a lamp in hand⁷
The Shaykh did all the city span,
Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man,
But could find none in all the land.

"I Rustam or a Hyder seek
I'm sick of snails, am sick," he said,
"There's none," said I. He shook his head,
"There's none like them, but still I seek."

—Rumi

Prologue

When the world-illuminating sun rushed upon
Night like a brigand,
My weeping bedewed the face of the rose.
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of
the narcissus,
My passion wakened the grass and made it
grow.
The Gardener tried the power of my song,
He sowed my verse and reaped a sword.
In the soil he planted only the seed of my
tears
And wove my lament with the garden, as
warp and woof.
Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:
Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.
My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup
It knows things that are yet unborn in the
world.

absolutely hopeless? The Democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity; it is a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Is not, then, the Democracy of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?"

⁷ The versified translation of the quotation from Rumi is taken from Shaikh Mahmud Husain. Strangely, Nicholson omitted it although he was best known as Rumi's translator.

My thought hunted down and slung from the
saddle a deer
That has not yet leaped forth from the covert
of non-existence.
Fair is my garden ere yet the leaves are green:
Unborn roses are hidden in the skirt of my
garment.
I struck dumb the musicians where they were
gathered together,
I smote the heart-string of the universe,
Because the lute of my genius hath a rare
melody:
Even to comrades my song is strange.
I am born in the world as a new sun,
I have not learned the ways and fashions of
the sky
Not yet have the stars fled before my
splendour,
Not yet is my quicksilver astir;
Untouched is the sea by my dancing rays,
Untouched are the mountains by my crimson
hue.
The eye of existence is not familiar with me;
I rise trembling, afraid to show myself.
From the East my dawn arrived and routed
Night,
A fresh dew settled on the rose of the world.
I am waiting for the votaries that rise at dawn;
Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire!
I have no need of the ear of To-day,
I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow.
My own age does not understand my deep
meanings,
My Joseph is not for this market.
I despair of my old companions,
My Sinai burns for sake of the Moses who is
coming.
Their sea is silent, like dew,
But my dew is storm-ridden, like the ocean.
My song is of another world than theirs:
This bell calls other travellers to take the road.
Many a poet was born after his death,
Opened our eyes when his own were closed,
And journeyed forth again from nothingness,
Like roses blossoming o'er the earth of his
grave.
Albeit caravans have passed through this
desert,

They passed, as a camel steps, with little
sound.
But I am a lover: loud crying is my faith
The clamour of Judgment Day is one of my
minions.
My song exceeds the range of the chord,
Yet I do not fear that my lute will break.
'Twere better for the water drop not to know
my torrent,
Whose fury should rather madden the sea.
No river will contain my Oman.
My flood requires whole seas to hold it.
Unless the bud expand into a bed of roses,
It is unworthy of my spring-cloud's bounty.
Lightnings slumber within my soul,
I sweep over mountain and plain.
Wrestle with my sea, if thou art a plain;
Receive my lightning if thou art a Sinai.
The Fountain of Life hath been given me to
drink.
I have been made an adept of the mystery of
Life.
The speck of dust was vitalised by my
burning song:
It unfolded wings and became a firefly.
No one hath told the secret which I will tell
Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine.
Come, if thou would'st know the secret of
everlasting life
Come, if thou would'st win both earth and
heaven.
Heaven taught me this lore,
I cannot hide it from comrades.

O Saki arise and pour wine into the cup!
Clear the vexation of Time from my heart
The sparkling liquor that flows from Zemzem
Were a beggar to worship it, he would
become a king.
It makes thought more sober and wise, it
makes the keen eye keener,
It gives to a straw the weight of a mountain,
And to foxes the strength of lions.
It causes dust to soar to the Pleiades
And a drop of water swell to the breadth of
the sea.
It turns silence into the din of Judgment Day,

It makes the foot of the partridge red with
blood of the hawk.
Arise and pour pure wine into my cup,
Pour moon beams into the dark night of my
thought,
That I may lead home the wanderer
And imbue the idle looker-on with restless
impatience;
And advance hotly on a new quest
And become known as the champion of a new
spirit;
And be to people of insight as the pupil to the
eye,
And sink into the ear of the world, like a
voice;
And exalt the worth of Poesy
And sprinkle the dry herbs with my tears.
Inspired by the genius of the Master of Rum.
I reherarse the sealed book of secret lore.
His soul is the flaming furnace,
I am but as the spark that gleams for a
moment.
His burning candle consumed me, the moth;
His wine overwhelmed my goblet.
The master of Rum transmuted my earth to
gold
And set my ashes aflame.
The grain of sand set forth from the desert,
That it might win the radiance of the sun.
I am a wave and I will come to rest in his sea,
That I may make the glistening pearl mine
own.
I who am drunken with the wine of his song
Draw life from the breath of his words,

'Twas night: my heart would fain lament.
The silence was filled with my cries to God.
I was complaining of the sorrows of the world
And bemoaning the emptiness of my cup.
At last mine eye could endure no more,
Broken with fatigue it went to sleep.
There appeared the Master, formed in the
mould of Truth,
Who wrote the Quran in Persian.
He said, "O frenzied lover,
Take a draught of love's pure wine.
Strike the chords of thine heart and rouse a
tumultuous strain.

Dash thine head against the goblet and thine
 eye against the lancet!
 Make thy laughter the source of a hundred
 sighs.
 Make the hearts of men bleed with thy tears
 How long wilt thou be silent, like a bud?
 Sell thy fragrance cheap, like the rose!
 Tongue-tied, thou art in pain:
 Cast thyself upon the fire, like rue!
 Like the bell, break silence at last, and from
 every limb.
 Utter forth a lamentation!
 Thou art fire: fill the world with thy glow!
 Make others burn with thy burning!
 Proclaim the secrets of the old wine seller;
 Be thou a surge of wine, and the crystal cup
 thy robe!
 Shatter the mirror of fear,
 Break the bottles in the bazaar
 Like the reed-flute, bring a message from the
 reed-bed
 Give to Majnun a message from the tribe of
 Layla!
 Create a new style for thy song,
 Enrich the assembly with thy piercing strains!
 Up, and re-inspire every living soul
 Say 'Arise!' and by that word quicken the
 living!
 Up, and set thy feet on another path;
 Put aside the passionate melancholy of old!
 Become familiar with the delight of singing;
 Bell of the caravan, awake!"

At these words my bosom was enkindled
 And swelled with emotion like the flute;
 I rose like music from the string
 To prepare a Paradise for the ear.
 I unveiled the mystery of the self
 And disclosed its wondrous secret.

My being was an unfinished statue,
 Uncomely, worthless, good for nothing.
 Love chiselled me: I became a man.
 And gained knowledge of the nature of the
 universe.

I have seen the movement of the sinews of the
 sky.
 And the blood coursing in the veins of the
 moon.

Many a night I wept for Man's sake
 That I might tear the veil from Life's
 mysteries.
 And extract the secret of Life's constitution
 From the laboratory of phenomena.
 I who give beauty to this night, like the moon,
 Am as dust in devotion to the pure Faith
 (Islam) –
 A Faith renowned in hill and dale.
 Which kindles in men's hearts a flame of
 undying song:
 It sowed an atom and reaped a sun,
 It harvested a hundred poets like Rumi and
 Attar.

I am a sigh: I will mount to the heavens;
 I am but smoke, yet am I sprung of fire.
 Driven onward by high thoughts, my pen
 Cast abroad the secret behind this veil,
 That the drop may become co-equal with the
 sea
 And the grain of sand grow into a Sahara.
 Poetising is not the aim of this *mathnavi*.
 Beauty-worshipping and love-making is not
 its aim.

I am of India: Persian is not my native tongue;
 I am like the crescent moon: my cup is not
 full.
 Do not seek from me charm of style in
 exposition.
 Do not seek from me Khansar and Isfahan.
 Although the language of Hind is sweet as
 sugar,
 Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech.
 My mind was enchanted by its loveliness,
 My pen became as a twig of the Burning
 Bush.

Because of the loftiness of my thoughts,
 Persian alone is suitable to them.
 O Reader, do not find fault with the wine-cup,
 But consider attentively the taste of the wine.

*Showing that the system of the universe
originates in the self and that the
continuation of the life of all individuals
depends on strengthening the self*

The form of existence is an effect of the self,
Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the self.
When the self awoke to consciousness,
It revealed the universe of Thought.
A hundred words are hidden in its essence:
Self-affirmation brings *not-self* to light.
By the self the seed of opposition is sown in
the world:
It imagines itself to be other than itself
It makes from itself the forms of others
In order to multiply the pleasure of strife.
It is slaying by the strength of its arm
That it may become conscious of its own
strength.
Its self-deceptions are the essence of Life;
Like the rose, it lives by bathing itself in
blood.
For the sake of a single rose it destroys a
hundred rose gardens
And makes a hundred lamentations in quest
of a single melody.
For one sky it produces a hundred new
moons,
And for one word a hundred discourses.
The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual
beauty.
The loveliness of Shirin justifies the anguish
of Farhad.
One fragrant navel justifies a hundred
musk-deer.
'Tis the fate of moths to consume in flame:
The suffering of moths is justified by the
candle.
The pencil of the self limned a hundred
to-days
In order to achieve the dawn of a single
morrow.
Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams
That the lamp of one Muhammad might be
lighted.
Subject, object, means, and causes—

All these are forms which it assumes for the
purpose of action.
The self rises, kindles, falls, glows, breathes,
Burns, shines, walks, and flies.
The spaciousness of Time is its arena,
Heaven is a billow of the dust on the road.
From its rose-planting the world abounds in
roses;
Night is born of its sleep, day springs from its
waking.
It divided its flame into sparks
And taught the understanding to worship
particulars.
It dissolved itself and created the atoms
It was scattered for a little while and created
sands.
Then it wearied of dispersion
And by re-uniting itself it became the
mountains.
'Tis the nature of the self to manifest itself
In every atom slumbers the might of the self.
Power that is unexpressed and inert
Chains the faculties which lead to action.
Inasmuch as the life of the universe comes
from the power of the self,
Life is in proportion to this power.
When a drop of water gets the self's lesson by
heart,
It makes its worthless existence a pearl.
Wine is formless because its self is weak;
It receives a form by favour of the cup.
Although the cup of wine assumes a form,
It is indebted to us for its motion.
When the mountain loses its self, it turns into
sands
And complains that the sea surges over it;
The wave, so long as it remains a wave in the
sea's bosom,
Makes itself rider on the sea's back.
Light transformed itself into an eye
And moved to and fro in search of beauty;
When the grass found a means of growth in
its self,
Its aspiration clove the breast of the garden.
The candle too concatenated itself
And built itself out of atoms;

Then it made a practice of melting itself away
and fled from its self
Until at last it trickled down from its own eye,
like tears.
If the bezel had been more self secure by
nature,
It would not have suffered wounds,
But since it derives its value from the
superscription,
Its shoulder is galled by the burden of
another's name.
Because the earth is firmly based on its self,
The captive moon goes round it perpetually.
The being of the sun is stronger than that of
the earth:
Therefore is the earth fascinated by the sun's
eye.
The glory of the red birch fixes our gaze,
The mountains are enriched by its majesty
Its raiment is woven of fire,
Its origin is one self-assertive seed.
When Life gathers strength from the self,
The river of Life expands into an ocean.

*Showing that the life of the self comes
from forming ideals and bringing them to
birth*

Life is preserved by purpose:
Because of the goal its caravan-bell tinkles.
Life is latent in seeking,
Its origin is hidden in desire.
Keep desire alive in thy heart,
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.
Desire is the soul of this world of hue and
scent,
The nature of everything is a storehouse of
desire.
Desire sets the heart dancing in the breast,
And by its glow the breast is made bright as a
mirror.
It gives to earth the power of soaring,
It is a Khizr to the Moses of perception.
From the flame of desire the heart takes life,
And when it takes life, all dies that is not true.
When it refrains from forming desires,
Its pinion breaks and it cannot soar.
Desire keeps the self in perpetual uproar:

It is a restless wave of the self's sea.
Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,
A binder of the book of deeds.
Negation of desire is death to the living,
Even as absence of heat extinguishes the
flame.
What is the source of our wakeful eye?
Our delight in seeing hath taken visible shape.
The partridge's leg is derived from the
elegance of its gait,
The nightingale's beak from its endeavour to
sing.
Away from the seed-bed, the reed became
happy:
The music was released from its prison.
What is the essence of the mind that strives
after new discoveries and scales the
heavens?
Knowest thou what works this miracle?
'Tis desire that enriches Life,
And the mind is a child of its womb.
What are social organisation, customs and
laws?
What is the secret of the novelties of science?
A desire which realised itself by its own
strength
And burst forth from the heart and took
shape.
Nose, hand, brain, eye, and ear,
Thought, imagination, feeling, memory, and
understanding –
All these are weapons devised by Life for
self-preservation
In its ceaseless struggle.
The object of science and art is not
knowledge,
The object of the garden is not the bud and
the flower.
Science is an instrument for the preservation
of Life,
Science is a means of invigorating the self.
Science and art are servants of Life,
Slaves born and bred in its house.
Rise, O thou who art strange to Life 's
mystery,
Rise intoxicated with the wine of an ideal:
An ideal shining as the dawn,
A blazing fire to all that is other than God;

An ideal higher than Heaven –
 Winning, captivating, enchanting men's
 hearts,
 A destroyer of ancient falsehood,
 Fraught with turmoil, and embodiment of the
 Last Day.
 We live by forming ideals,
 We glow with the sunbeams of desire!

*Showing that the self is strengthened by
 love*

The luminous point whose name is the self
 Is the life-spark beneath our dust.
 By Love it is made more lasting,
 More living, more burning, more glowing.
 From Love proceeds the radiance of its being.
 And the development of its unknown
 possibilities.
 Its nature gathers fire from Love,
 Love instructs it to illumine the world.
 Love fears neither sword nor dagger,
 Love is not born of water and air and earth.
 Love makes peace and war in the world,
 Love is the Fountain of Life, Love is the
 flashing sword of Death.
 The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's
 glance:
 Love of God at last becomes wholly God.
 Learn thou to love, and seek a beloved:
 Seek an eye like Noah's, a heart like Job's!
 Transmute thy handful of earth into gold,
 Kiss the threshold of a Perfect Man!
 Like Rumi, light the candle
 And burn Rum in the fire of Tabriz!
 There is a beloved hidden within thine heart:
 I will show him to thee, if thou hast eyes to
 see.
 His lovers are fairer than the fair,
 Sweeter and comelier and more beloved.
 By love of him the heart is made strong
 And earth rubs shoulders with the Pleiades.
 The soil of Najd was quickened by his grace
 And fell into a rapture and rose to the skies.
 In the Muslim 's heart is the home of
 Muhammad,
 All our glory is from the name of
 Muhammad.

Sinai is but an eddy of the dust of his house,
 His dwelling-place is a sanctuary to the Ka'ba
 itself.
 Eternity is less than a moment of his time,
 Eternity receives increase from his essence.
 He slept on a mat of rushes,
 But the crown of Chosroes was under his
 people's feet.
 He chose the nightly solitude of Mount Hira,
 And he founded a state and laws and
 government.
 He passed many a night with sleepless eyes
 In order that the Muslims might sleep on the
 throne of Persia.
 In the hour of battle, iron was melted by the
 fash of his sword;
 In the hour of prayer, tears fell like rain from
 his eye.
 When he prayed for Divine help, his sword
 answered "Amen"
 And extirpated the race of kings.
 He instituted new laws in the world,
 He brought the empires of antiquity to an
 end.
 With the key of religion he opened the door of
 this world:
 The womb of the world never bore his like.
 In his sight high and low were one,
 He sat with his slave at one table.
 The daughter of the chieftain of Tai was taken
 prisoner in battle
 And brought into that exalted presence;
 Her feet in chains, unveiled,
 And her neck bowed with shame.
 When the Prophet saw that the poor girl had
 no veil,
 He covered her face with his own mantle.
 We are more naked than that lady of Tai,
 We are unveiled before the nations of the
 world.
 In him is our trust on the Day of Judgement,
 And in this world too he is our protector.
 Both his favour and his wrath are entirely a
 mercy:
 That is a mercy to his friends and this to his
 foes.
 He opened the gate of mercy to his enemies,

He gave to Makkah the message, "No penalty shall be laid upon you."

We who know not the bonds of country
Resemble sight, which is one though it be the
light of two eyes.

We belong to the Hijaz and China and Persia,
Yet we are the dew of one smiling dawn.
We are all under the spell of the eye of the
cup bearer from Makkah,

We are united as wine and cup.

He burnt clean away distinctions of lineage,
His fire consumed this trash and rubble.

We are like a rose with many petals but with
one perfume:

He is the soul of this society, and he is one
We are the secret concealed in his heart:
He spake out fearlessly, and we were
revealed.

The song of love for him fills my silent reed,
A hundred notes throb in my bosom.

How shall I tell what devotion he inspires?
A block of dry wood wept at parting from
him.

The Muslim's being is where he manifests his
glory:

Many a Sinai springs from the dust on his
path.

My image was created by his mirror,
My dawn rises from the sun of his breast.

My repose is a perpetual fever,
My evening hotter than the morning of
Judgment Day:

He is the April cloud and I his garden,
My vine is bedewed with his rain.

It sowed mine eye in the field of Love
And reaped a harvest of vision.

"The soil of Medina is sweeter than both
worlds:

Oh, happy the town where dwell the
Beloved!"

I am lost in admiration of the style of Mulla
Jami:

His verse and prose are a remedy for my
immaturity.

He has written poetry overflowing with
beautiful ideas;

And has threaded pearls in praise of the
Master-

"Muhammad is the preface to the book of the
universe:

All the worlds are slaves and he is the
Master."

From the wine of Love spring many spiritual
qualities:

Amongst the attributes of Love is blind
devotion.

The saint of Bistam, who in devotion was
unique,

Abstained from eating a water-melon.

Be a lover constant in devotion to thy
beloved,

That thou mayst cast thy nose and capture
God.

Sojourn for a while on the Hira of the heart.
Abandon self and flee to God.

Strengthened by God, return to thy self
And break the heads of the Lat and Uzza of
sensuality.

By the might of Love evoke an army
Reveal thyself on the Faran of Love,

That the Lord of the Ka'ba may show thee
favour

And make thee the object of the text, "Lo, I
will appoint a vicegerent on the earth."

*Showing that the self is weakened by
asking*

O thou who hast gathered taxes from lions,
Thy need hath caused thee to become a fox in
disposition.

Thy maladies are the result of indigence:
This disease is the source of thy pain.

It is robbing thine high thoughts of their
dignity

And putting out the light of thy noble
imagination.

Quaff rosy wine from the jar of existence!
Snatch thy money from the purse of Time!

Like Omar, come down from thy camel!
Beware of incurring obligations, beware!

How long wilt thou sue for office
And ride like children on a reed?

A nature that fixes its gaze on the sky
Becomes debased by receiving benefits.

By asking, poverty is made more abject;
 By begging, the beggar is made poorer.
 Asking disintegrates the self
 And deprives of illumination the Sinai bush
 of the self.
 Do not scatter thy handful of dust;
 Like the moon, scrape food from thine own
 side!
 Albeit thou art poor and wretched
 And overwhelmed by affliction,
 Seek not thy daily bread from the bounty of
 another,
 Seek not water from the fountain of the sun,
 Lest thou be put to shame before the Prophet
 On the Day when every soul shall be stricken
 with fear.
 The moon gets sustenance from the table of
 the sun
 And bears the brand of his bounty on her
 heart.
 Pray God for courage! Wrestle with Fortune!
 Do not sully the honour of the pure religion!
 He who swept the rubbish of idols out of the
 Ka'ba
 Said that God loves a man that earns his
 living.
 Woe to him that accepts bounty from
 another's table
 And lets his neck be bent with benefits!
 He hath consumed himself with the lightning
 of the favours bestowed on him,
 He hath sold his honour for a paltry coin.
 Happy the man who thirsting in the sun
 Does not crave of Khizr a cup of water!
 His brow is not moist with the shame of
 beggary;
 He is a man still, not a piece of clay,
 That noble youth walks under heaven
 With his head erect like the pine.
 Are his hands empty? The more is he master
 of himself.
 Do his fortunes languish? The more alert is
 he.
 A whole ocean, if gained by begging is but a
 sea of fire;
 Sweet is a little dew gathered by one's own
 hand.
 Be a man of honour, and like the bubble

Keep the cup inverted even in the midst of the
 sea!

*Showing that when the self is
 strengthened by love it gains dominion
 over the outward and inward forces of the
 universe*

When the self is made strong by Love
 Its power rules the whole world.
 The Heavenly Sage who adorned the sky with
 stars
 Plucked these buds from the bough of the self.
 Its hand becomes God's hand,
 The moon is split by its fingers.
 It is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the
 world,
 Its command is obeyed by Darius and
 Jamshid.
 I will tell thee a story of Bu Ali,
 Whose name is renowned in India,
 Him who sang of the ancient rose-garden
 And discoursed to us about the lovely rose:
 The air of his fluttering skirt
 Made a Paradise of this fire-born country.
 His young disciple went one day to the
 bazaar –
 The wine of Bu Ali's discourse had turned his
 head.
 The governor of the city was coming along on
 horseback,
 His servant and staff-bearer rode beside him.
 The forerunner shouted, "O senseless one,
 Do not get in the way of the governor's
 escort!"
 But the dervish walked on with drooping
 head,
 Sunk in the sea of his own thoughts.
 The staff-bearer, drunken with pride,
 Broke his staff on the head of the dervish.
 Who stepped painfully out of the governor's
 way.
 Sad and sorry, with a heavy heart.
 He came to Bu Ali and complained
 And released the tears from his eyes.
 Like lightning that falls on mountains,

The Shaykh poured forth a fiery torrent of speech.
 He let loose from his soul a strange fire,
 He gave an order to his secretary:
 "Take thy pen and write a letter
 From a dervish to a sultan!
 Say, 'Thy governor has broken my servant's head;
 He has cast burning coals on his own life.
 Arrest this wicked governor,
 Or else I will bestow thy kingdom on another.
 The letter of the saint who had access to God
 Caused the monarch to tremble in every limb.
 His body was filled with aches,
 He grew as pale as the evening sun.
 He sought out a handcuff for the governor
 And entreated Bu Ali to pardon this offence.
 Khusrau, the sweet-voiced eloquent poet,
 Whose harmonies flow from the mind
 And whose genius hath the soft brilliance of moonlight,
 Was chosen to be the king's ambassador.
 When he entered Bu Ali's presence and
 played his lute,
 His song melted the fakir's soul like glass.
 One strain of Poesy bought the grace
 Of a kingdom that was firm as a mountain.
 Do not wound the heart of dervishes,
 Do not throw thyself into burning fire!

*A tale of which the moral is that negation
 of the self is a doctrine invented by the
 subject races of mankind in order that by
 this means they may sap and weaken the
 character of their rulers*

Hast thou heard that in the time of old
 The sheep dwelling in a certain pasture
 So increased and multiplied
 That they feared no enemy?
 At last, from the malice of Fate,
 Their breasts were smitten by a shaft of calamity.
 The tigers sprang forth from the jungle
 And rushed upon the sheepfold.
 Conquest and dominion are signs of strength,
 Victory is the manifestation of strength.

Those fierce tigers beat the drum of
 sovereignty,
 They deprived the sheep of freedom.
 For as much as tigers must have their prey,
 That meadow was crimsoned with the blood
 of the sheep.
 One of the sheep which was clever and acute,
 Old in years, cunning as a weather-beaten
 wolf,
 Being grieved at the fate of his fellows
 And sorely vexed by the violence of the tigers,
 Made complaint of the course of Destiny
 And sought by craft to restore the fortunes of
 his race.
 The weak, in order to preserve themselves,
 Seek device from skilled intelligence.
 In slavery, for the sake of repelling harm,
 The power of scheming becomes quickened.
 And when the madness of revenge gains
 hold,
 The mind of the slave meditates rebellion.
 "Ours is a hard knot," said this sheep to
 himself,
 "The ocean of our griefs hath no shore,
 By force we sheep cannot escape from the
 tiger:
 Our legs are silver, his paws are steel.
 'Tis not possible, however much one exhorts
 and counsels.
 To create in a sheep the disposition of a wolf.
 But to make the furious tiger a sheep – that is
 possible:
 To make him unmindful of his nature – that is
 possible."
 He became as a prophet inspired,
 And began to preach to the blood-thirsty
 tigers.
 He cried out, "O ye insolent liars,
 Who wot not of a day of ill luck that shall
 continue for ever!
 I am possessed of spiritual power,
 I am an apostle sent by God for the tigers.
 I come as a light for the eye that is dark,
 I come to establish laws and give
 commandments.
 Repent of your blameworthy deeds!
 O plotters of evil, bethink yourselves of good!
 Whoso is violent and strong is miserable:

Life's solidity depends on self-denial.
 The spirit of the righteous is fed by fodder:
 The vegetarian is pleasing unto God.
 The sharpness of your teeth brings disgrace
 upon you
 And makes the eye of your perception blind.
 Paradise is for the weak alone,
 Strength is but a means to perdition.
 It is wicked to seek greatness and glory,
 Penury is sweeter than princedom.
 Lightning does not threaten the cornseed:
 If the seed become a stack, it is unwise.
 If you are sensible, you will be a mote of sand,
 not a Sahara,
 So that you may enjoy the sunbeams.
 O thou that delightest in the slaughter of
 sheep,
 Slay thy self, and thou wilt have honour!
 Life is rendered unstable
 By violence, oppression, revenge, and exercise
 of power.
 Though trodden underfoot, the grass grows
 up time after time
 And washes the sleep of death from its eye
 again and again.
 Forget thy self, if thou art wise!
 If thou dost not forget thy self, thou art mad.
 Close thine eyes, close thine ears, close thy
 lips,
 That thy thought may reach the lofty sky!
 This pasturage of the world is naught, naught:
 O fool, do not torment thy phantom!
 The tiger-tribe was exhausted by hard
 struggles,
 They had set their hearts on enjoyment of
 luxury.
 This soporific advice pleased them,
 In their stupidity they swallowed the charm
 of the sheep.
 He that used to make sheep his prey
 Now embraced a sheep's religion.
 The tigers took kindly to a diet of fodder:
 At length their tigerish nature was broken.
 The fodder blunted their teeth
 And put out the awful flashings of their eyes.
 By degrees courage ebbed from their breasts,
 The sheen departed from mirror.

That frenzy of uttermost exertion remained
 not,
 That craving after action dwelt in their hearts
 no more.
 They lost the power of ruling and the
 resolution to be independent,
 They lost reputation, prestige, and fortune.
 Their paws that were as iron became
 strengthless;
 Their souls died and their bodies became
 tombs.
 Bodily strength diminished while spiritual
 fear increased;
 Spiritual fear robbed them of courage.
 Lack of courage produced a hundred
 diseases—
 Poverty, pusillanimity, low mindedness.
 The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by
 the sheep's charm
 He called his decline Moral Culture.

*To the effect that Plato, whose thought has
 deeply influenced the mysticism and
 literature of Islam, followed the sheep's
 doctrine, and that we must be on our
 guard against his theories*

Plato, the prime ascetic and sage
 Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.
 His Pegasus went astray in the darkness of
 idealism
 And dropped its shoe amidst the rocks of
 actuality.
 He was so fascinated by the invisible
 That he made hand, eye, and ear of no
 account.
 "To die," said he, "is the secret of Life:
 The candle is glorified by being put out."
 He dominates our thinking,
 His cup sends us to sleep and takes the
 sensible world away from us.
 He is a sheep in man's clothing,
 The soul of the Sufi bows to his authority.
 He soared with his intellect to the highest
 heaven
 And called the world of phenomena a myth.

'Twas his work to dissolve the structure of
Life
And cut the bough of Life's fair tree asunder.
The thought of Plato regarded loss as profit,
His philosophy declared that being is
not-being.
His nature drowsed and created a dream
His mind's eye created a mirage.
Since he was without any taste for action,
His soul was enraptured by the nonexistent.
He disbelieved in the material universe
And became the creator of invisible Ideas.
Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living
spirit,
Dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit:
Its gazelles have no grave of movement,
Its partridges are denied the pleasure of
walking daintily.
Its dewdrops are unable to quiver,
Its birds have no breath in their breasts,
Its seed does not desire to grow,
Its moths do not know how to flutter.
Our recluse had no remedy but flight:
He could not endure the noise of this world.
He set his heart on the glow of a quenched
flame
And depicted a word steeped in opium.
He spread his wings towards the sky
And never came down to his nest again.
His fantasy is sunk in the jar of heaven:
I know not whether it is the dregs or brick of
the wine-jar.
The peoples were poisoned by his
intoxication:
He slumbered and took no delight in deeds.

*Concerning the true nature of poetry and
reform of Islamic literature*

'Tis the brand of desire makes the blood of
man run warm,
By the lamp of desire this dust is enkindled.
By desire Life's cup is brimmed with wine,
So that Life leaps to its feet and marches
briskly on.
Life is occupied with conquest alone,
And the one charm for conquest is desire.
Life is the hunter and desire the snare,

Desire is Love's message to Beauty.
Wherefore doth desire swell continuously
The bass and treble of Life's song?
Whatsoever is good and fair and beautiful
Is our guide in the wilderness of seeking.
Its image becomes impressed on thine heart,
It creates desires in thine heart.
Beauty is the creator of desire's springtide,
Desire is nourished by the display of Beauty.
'Tis in the poet's breast that Beauty unveils,
'Tis from his Sinai that Beauty's beams arise.
By his look the fair is made fairer,
Through his enchantments Nature is more
beloved.
From his lips the nightingale hath learned her
song,
And his rouge hath brightened the cheek of
the rose.
'Tis his passion burns in the heart of the moth,
'Tis he that lends glowing hues to love tales.
Sea and land are hidden within his water and
clay,
A hundred new worlds are concealed in his
heart.
Ere tulips blossomed in his brain
There was heard no note of joy or grief.
His music breathes o'er us a wonderful
enchantment,
His pen draws a mountain with a single hair.
His thoughts dwell with the moon and the
stars,
He creates beauty and knows not what is
ugly.
He is a Khizr, and amidst his darkness is the
Fountain of Life:
All things that exist are made more living by
his tears.
Heavily we go, like raw novices,
Stumbling on the way to the goal.
His nightingale hath played a tune
And laid a plot to beguile us.
That he may lead us into Life's Paradise,
And that Life's bow may become a full circle.
Caravans march at the sound of his bell
And follow the voice of his pipe;
When his zephyr blows in our garden,
It slowly steals into the tulips and roses.
His witchery makes Life develop itself

And become self-questioning and impatient.
He invites the whole world to his table;
He lavishes his fire as though it were cheap as
air.
Woe to a people that resigns itself to death
And whose poet turns away from the joy of
living!
His mirror shows beauty as ugliness,
His honey leaves a hundred stings in the
heart.
His kiss robs the rose of freshness,
He takes away from the nightingale's heart
the joy of flying.
The sinews are relaxed by his opium,
Thou payest for his song with the life.
He bereaves the cypress of delight in its
beauty,
His cold breath makes a pheasant of the male
falcon.
He is a fish. and from the breast upward a
man,
Like the Sirens in the ocean.
With his song he enchants the pilot
And casts the ship to the bottom of the sea.
His melodies steal firmness from thine heart,
His magic persuades thee that death is life.
He takes from thy soul the desire of existence,
He extracts from thy mine the blushing ruby.
He dresses gain in the garb of loss,
He makes everything praiseworthy blameful,
He plunges thee in a sea of thought
And makes thee a stranger to action.
He is sick, and by his words our sickness is
increased
The more his cup goes round, the more sick
are they that quaff it.
There are no lightning rains in his April,
His garden is a mirage of colour and perfume.
His beauty hath no dealings with Truth,
There are none but flawed pearls in his sea.
Slumber he deemed sweeter than waking:
Our fire was quenched by his breath.
By the chant of his nightingale the heart was
poisoned:
Under his heap of roses lurked a snake.
Beware of his decanter and cup!
Beware of his sparkling wine!

O thou whom his wine hath laid low
And who look'st to his glass for thy rising
dawn,
O thou whose heart hath been chilled by his
melodies,
Thou hast drunk deadly poison through the
ear!
Thy way of life is a proof of thy degeneracy,
The strings of thine instrument are out of
tune,
'Tis pampered ease hath made thee so
wretched,
A disgrace to Islam throughout the world.
One can bind thee with the vein of a rose,
One can wound thee with a zephyr.
Love hath been put to shame by thy wailing,
His fair picture hath been fouled by thy
brush.
Thy illness hath paled his cheek,
The coldness hath taken the glow from his
fire.
He is heartsick from thy heart sicknesses,
And enfeebled by thy feeblenesses.
His cup is full of childish tears,
His house is furnished with distressful sighs.
He is a drunkard begging at tavern doors,
Stealing glimpses of beauty from lattices,
Unhappy, melancholy, injured,
Kicked well-nigh to death by the warder;
Wasted like a reed by sorrows,
On his lips a store of complaints against
Heaven.
Flattery and spite are the mettle of his mirror,
Helplessness his comrade of old;
A miserable base-born underling
Without worth or hope or object,
Whose lamentations have sucked the marrow
from thy soul
And driven off gentle sleep from thy
neighbours' eyes.
Alas for a love whose fire is extinct,
A love that was born in the Holy Place and
died in the house of idols!
Oh, if thou hast the coin of poesy in thy purse,
Rub it on the touchstone of Life!
Clear-seeing thought shows the way to action,
As the lightning-flash precedes the thunder.

It behoves thee to meditate well concerning
 literature,
 It behoves thee to go back to Arabia:
 Thou must needs give thine heart to the
 Salma of Araby,
 That the morn of the Hijaz may blossom from
 the night of Kurdistan.
 Thou hast gathered roses from the garden of
 Persia
 And seen the springtide of India and Iran:
 Now taste a little of the heat of the desert,
 Drink the old wine of the date!
 Lay thine head for once on its hot breast.
 Yield thy body awhile to its scorching wind!
 For a long time thou hast turned about on a
 bed of silk:
 Now accustom thyself to rough cotton!
 For generations thou hast danced on tulips
 And bathed thy cheek in dew, like the rose:
 Now throw thyself on the burning sand
 And plunge in to the fountain of Zamzam!
 How long wilt thou fain lament like the
 nightingale?
 How long make thine abode in gardens?
 O thou whose auspicious snare would do
 honour to the Phoenix,
 Build a nest on the high mountains,
 A nest embosomed in lightning and thunder,
 Loftier than eagle's eye,
 That thou mayst be fit for Life's battle,
 That thy body and soul may burn in Life's
 fire!

*Showing that the education of the self has
 three stages: obedience, self-control, and
 divine vicegerency*

1. Obedience

Service and toil are traits of the camel,
 Patience and perseverance are ways of the
 camel.
 Noiselessly he steps along the sandy track,
 He is the ship of those who voyage in the
 desert.
 Every thicket knows the print of his foot:
 He eats seldom, sleeps little, and is inured to
 toil.

He carries rider, baggage, and litter:
 He trots on and on to the journey's end,
 Rejoicing in his speed,
 More patient in travel than his rider,
 Thou, too, do not refuse the burden of Duty:
 So wilt thou enjoy the best dwelling place,
 which is with God.
 Endeavour to obey, O heedless one!
 Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.
 By obedience the man of no worth is made
 worthy;
 By disobedience his fire is turned to ashes.
 Whoso would master the sun and stars,
 Let him make himself a prisoner of Law!
 The air becomes fragrant when it is
 imprisoned in the flower-bud;
 The perfume becomes musk when it is
 confined in the -navel of the muskdeer.
 The star moves towards its goal
 With head bowed in surrender to a law.
 The grass springs up in obedience to the law
 of growth:
 When it abandons that, it is trodden
 underfoot.
 To burn unceasingly is the law of the tulip.
 And so the blood leaps in its veins
 Drops of water become a sea by the law of
 union,
 And grains of sand become a Sahara.
 Since Law makes everything strong within,
 Why dost thou neglect this source of strength?
 O thou that art emancipated from the old
 Custom,
 Adorn thy feet once more with the same fine
 silver chain!
 Do not complain of the hardness of the Law,
 Do not transgress the statutes of Muhammad!

2. Self-Control

Thy soul cares only for itself, like the camel:
 It is self-conceited, self-governed, and
 self-willed.
 Be a man, get its halter into thine hand,
 That thou mayst become a pearl albeit thou
 art a potter's vessel.
 He that does not command himself
 Becomes a receiver of commands from others.
 When they moulded thee of clay,

Love and fear were mingled in thy making;
 Fear of this world and of the world to come,
 fear of death,
 Fear of all the pains of earth and heaven;
 Love of riches and power, love of country,
 Love of self and kindred and wife.
 Man, in whom clay is mixed with water, is
 fond of ease,
 Devoted to wickedness and enamoured of
 evil.
 So long as thou hold'st the staff of "There is
 no god but He,"
 Thou wilt break every spell of fear.
 One to whom God is as the soul in his body,
 His neck is not bowed before vanity.
 Fear finds no way into his bosom,
 heart is afraid of none but Allah.
 Whoso dwells in the world of Negation
 Is freed from the bonds of wife and child.
 He withdraws his gaze from all except God
 And lays the knife to the throat of his son.
 Though single, he is like a host in onset:
 Life is cheaper in his eyes than wind.
 The profession of Faith is the shell, and prayer
 is the pearl within it:
 The Moslem's heart deems prayer a lesser
 pilgrimage.
 In the Muslim's hand prayer is like a dagger
 Killing sin and forwardness and wrong.
 Fasting makes an assault upon hunger and
 thirst.
 And breaches the citadel of sensuality.
 The pilgrimage enlightens the soul of the
 Faithful:
 It teaches separation from one's home and
 destroys attachment to one's native land;
 It is an act of devotion in which all feel
 themselves to be one,
 It binds together the leaves of the book of
 religion.
 Almsgiving causes love of riches to pass away
 And makes equality familiar;
 It fortifies the heart with righteousness,
 It increases wealth and diminishes fondness
 for wealth.
 All this is a means of strengthening thee:
 Thou art impregnable, if thy Islam be strong.

Draw might from the litany "O Almighty
 One!"
 That thou mayst ride the camel of thy body.

3. *Divine Vicegerency*

If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the
 world
 And wear on thine head the crown of
 Solomon.
 Thou wilt be the glory of the world whilst the
 world lasts,
 And thou wilt reign in the kingdom
 incorruptible.
 'Tis sweet to be God's vicegerent in the world
 And exercise sway over the elements.
 God's vicegerent is as the soul of the universe,
 His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
 He knows the mysteries of part and whole,
 He executes the command of Allah in the
 world.
 When he pitches his tent in the wide world,
 He rolls up this ancient carpet.
 His genius abounds with life and desires to
 manifest itself:
 He will bring another world into existence.
 A hundred worlds like this world of parts and
 wholes
 Spring up, like roses, from the seed of his
 imagination.
 He makes every raw nature ripe,
 He puts the idols out of the sanctuary.
 Heart-strings give forth music at his touch,
 He wakes and sleeps for God alone.
 He teaches age the melody of youth
 And endows every thing with the radiance of
 youth.
 To the human race he brings both a glad
 message and a warning,
 He comes both as a soldier and as a marshal
 and prince.
 He is the final cause of "God taught Adam the
 names of all things,"
 He is the inmost sense of "Glory to Him that
 transported His servant by night."
 His white hand is strengthened by the staff,
 His knowledge is twined with the power of a
 perfect man.
 When that bold cavalier seizes the reins,

The steed of Time gallops faster.
 His awful mien makes the Red Sea dry,
 He leads Israel out of Egypt.
 At his cry, "Arise," the dead spirits
 Rise in their bodily tomb, like pines in the
 field.
 His person is an atonement for all the world,
 By his grandeur the world is saved.
 His protecting shadow makes the mote
 familiar with the sun,
 His rich substance makes precious all that
 exists.
 He bestows life by his miraculous actions,
 He renovates old ways of life.
 Splendid visions rise from the print of his
 foot,
 Many a Moses is entranced by his Sinai.
 He gives a new explanation of Life,
 A new interpretation of this dream.
 His hidden life is being Life's mystery,
 The unheard music of Life's harp.
 Nature travels in blood for generations
 To compose the harmony of his personality.
 Our handful of earth has reach the zenith,
 For that champion will come forth from this
 dust!
 There sleeps amidst the ashes, of our To-day
 The flame of a world-consuming morrow.
 Our bed enfolds a garden of roses,
 Our eyes are bright with to-morrow's dawn.
 Appear, O rider of Destiny!
 Appear, O light of the dark realm of Change!
 Illumine the scene of existence,
 Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!
 Silence the noise of the nations,
 Imparadise our ears with thy music!
 Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,
 Give us back the cup of the wine of love!
 Bring once more days of peace to the world,
 Give a message of peace to them that seek
 battle!
 Mankind are the cornfield and thou the
 harvest,
 Thou art the goal of Life's caravan.
 The leaves are scattered by Autumn's fury:
 Oh, do thou pass over our gardens as the
 Spring!
 Receive from our downcast brows

The homage of little children and of young
 men and old!

It is to thee that we owe our dignity
 And silently undergo the pains of life.

*Setting forth the inner meaning of the
 names of Ali*

Ali is the first Muslim and the King of men,
 In Love's eyes Ali is the treasure of the Faith.
 Devotion to his family inspires me with life
 So that I am as a shining pearl.
 Like the narcissus, I am enraptured with
 gazing:
 Like perfume, I am straying through his
 pleasure garden.
 If holy water gushes from my earth, he is the
 source;
 If wine pours from my grapes, he is the cause.
 I am dust, but his sun hath made me as a
 mirror:
 Song can be seen in my breast.
 From Ali's face the Prophet drew many a fair
 omen,
 By his majesty the true religion is glorified
 His commandments are the strength of Islam:
 All things pay allegiance to his House.
 The Apostle of God gave him the name Bu
 Turab;
 God in the Koran called him "the Hand of
 Allah."
 Every one that is acquainted with Life's
 mysteries
 Knows what is the inner meaning of the
 names of Ali.
 The dark clay, whose name is the body—
 Our reason is ever bemoaning its iniquity.
 On account of it our sky-reaching thought
 plods over the earth;
 It makes our eyes blind and our ears deaf.
 It hath in its hand a two-edged sword of lust:
 Travelers' hearts are broken by this brigand.
 Ali, the Lion of God, subdued the body's clay
 And transmuted this dark earth to gold.
 Murtaza, by whose sword the splendour of
 Truth was revealed,
 Is named Bu Turab from his conquest of the
 body.

Man wins territory by prowess in battle,
But his brightest jewel is mastery of himself.
Whosoever in the world becomes a Bu Turab
Turns back the sun from the west;
Whosoever saddles tightly the seed of the
body
Sits like the bezel on the seal of sovereignty:
Here the might of Khyber is under his feet,
And hereafter his hand will distribute the
water of Kauthar.
Through self-knowledge, he acts as God's
Hand,
And in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns
over all.
His person is the gate of the city of the
sciences:
Arabia, China, and Greece are subject to him.
If thou wouldst drink clear wine from thine
own grapes,
Thou must needs wield authority over thine
own earth.
To become earth is the creed of a moth:
Be a conqueror of earth; that alone is worthy
of a man.
Thou art soft as a rose. Become hard as a
stone,
That thou mayst be the foundation of the wall
of the garden!
Build thy clay into a Man,
Build thy Man into a World!
Unless from thine own earth thou build thine
own wall or door,
Someone else will make bricks of thine earth.
O thou who complainest of the cruelty of
Heaven,
Thou whose glass cries out against the
injustice of the stone,
How long this wailing and crying and
lamentation?
How long this perpetual beating of thy
breast?
The pith of Life is contained in action,
To delight in creation is the law of Life.
Arise and create a new world!
Wrap thyself in flames, be an Abraham!
To comply with this world which does not
favour thy purposes

Is to fling away thy buckler on the field of
battle.
The man of strong character who is master of
himself
Will find Fortune complaisant.
If the world does not comply with his
humour,
He will try the hazard of war with Heaven;
He will dig up the foundations of the universe
And cast its atoms into a new mould.
He will subvert the course of Time
And wreck the azure firmament.
By his own strength he will produce
A new world which will do his pleasure.
If one cannot live in the world as beseems a
man,
Then it is better to die like the brave.
He that hath a sound heart
Will prove his strength by great enterprises.
'Tis sweet to use love in hard tasks
And, like Abraham, to gather roses from
flames.
The potentialities of men of action
Are displayed in willing acceptance of what is
difficult.
Mean spirits have no weapon but resentment.
Life has only one law.
Life is power made manifest,
And its mainspring is the desire for victory.
Mercy out of season is a chilling of Life's
blood,
A break in the rhythm of Life's music.
Whoever is sunk in the depths of ignominy
Calls his weakness contentment.
Weakness is the plunderer of Life,
Its womb is teeming with fears and lies.
Its soul is empty of virtues,
Vices fatten on its milk.
O man of sound judgment, beware!
This spoiler is lurking in ambush
Be not its dupe, if thou art wise:
Chameleon-like, it changes colour every
moment.
Even by keen observers its form is not
discerned:
Veils are thrown over its face.
Now it is muffled in pity and gentleness,
Now it wears the cloak of humanity.

Some times it is disguised as compulsion,
 Sometimes as excusability.
 It appears in the shape of self-indulgence
 And robs the strong man's heart of courage.
 Strength is the twin of Truth;
 If thou knowest thyself, strength is the
 Truth-revealing glass.
 Life is the seed, and power the crop:
 Power explains the mystery of truth and
 falsehood.
 A claimant, if he be possessed of power,
 Needs no argument for his claim.
 Falsehood derives from power the authority
 of truth,
 And by falsifying truth deems itself true.
 Its creative word transforms poison into
 nectar;
 It says to good, "Thou art bad," and Good
 becomes Evil.
 O thou that art heedless of the trust
 committed to thee,
 Esteem thyself superior to both worlds!
 Gain knowledge of Life's mysteries!
 Be a tyrant! Ignore all except God!
 O man of understanding, open thine eyes,
 ears, and lips!
 If then thou seest not the Way of Truth, laugh
 at me!

*Story of a young man of Merv who came
 to the saint Ali Hajwiri (god have mercy
 on him) and complained that he was
 oppressed by his enemies*

The saint of Hajwir was venerated by the
 peoples,
 And Pir-i-Sanjar visited his tomb as a pilgrim.
 With ease he broke down the mountain
 barriers
 And sowed the seed of Islam in India.
 The age of Omar was restored by his
 godliness,
 The fame of the Truth was exalted by his
 words,
 He was a guardian of the honour of the
 Koran.

The house of Falsehood fell in ruins at his
 gaze.
 The dust of the Punjab was brought to life by
 his breath,
 Our dawn was made splendid by his sun.
 He was a lover, and withal, a courier of Love:
 The secrets of Love shone forth from his
 brow.
 I will tell a story of his perfection
 And enclose a whole rose-bed in a single bud.
 A young man, cypress-tall,
 Came from the town of Merv to Lahore.
 He went to see the venerable saint,
 That the sun might dispel his darkness.
 "I am hammed in," he said, "by foes;
 I am as a glass in the midst of stones.
 Do thou teach me, O sire of heavenly rank,
 How to lead my life amongst enemies!"
 The wise Director, in whose nature
 Love had allied beauty with majesty,
 Answered: "Thou art unread in Life's lore,
 Careless of its end and its beginning.
 Be without fear of others!
 Thou art a sleeping force: awake!
 When the stone thought itself to be glass,
 It became glass and got into the way of
 breaking.
 If the traveller thinks himself weak,
 He delivers his soul unto the brigand.
 How long wilt thou regard thyself as water
 and clay?
 Create from thy clay a flaming Sinai!
 Why be angry with mighty men?
 Why complain of enemies?
 I will declare the truth: thine enemy is thy
 friend;
 His existence crowns thee with glory.
 Whosoever knows the states of the self
 Considers a powerful enemy to be a blessing
 from God.
 To the seed of Man the enemy is as a
 rain-cloud:
 He awakens its potentialities.
 If thy spirit be strong, the stones in thy way
 are as water:
 What wrecks the torrent of the ups and
 downs of the road?

The sword of resolution is whetted by the
stones in the way
And put to proof by traversing stage after
stage.
What is the use of eating and sleeping like a
beast?
What is the use of being, unless thou have
strength in thyself?
When thou mak'st thyself strong with self,
Thou wilt destroy the world at thy pleasure.
If thou wouldst pass away, become free of
self;
If thou wouldst live, become full of self!
What is death? To become oblivious to self.
Why imagine that it is the parting of soul and
body?
Abide in self, like Joseph!
Advance from captivity to empire!
Think of self and be a man of action!
Be a man of God, bear mysteries within!"
I will explain the matter by means of stories,
I will open the bud by the power of my
breath.
"Tis better that a lover's secret
Should be told by the lips of others."

Story of the bird that was faint with thirst

A bird was faint with thirst,
The breath in his body was heaving like
waves of smoke.
He saw a diamond in the garden:
Thirst created a vision of water.
Deceived by the sun bright stone
The foolish bird fancied that it was water.
He got no moisture from the gem:
He pecked it with his beak, but it did not wet
his palate.
"O thrall of vain desire," said the diamond,
Thou hast sharpened thy greedy beak on me;
But I am not a dew drop, I give no drink,
I do not live for the sake of others.
Wouldst thou hurt me? Thou art mad!
A life that reveals the self is strange to thee.
My water will shiver the beaks of birds
And break the jewel of man's life."
The bird won not his heart's wish from the
diamond

And turned away from the sparkling stone.
Disappointment swelled in his breast,
The song in his throat became a wail.
Upon a rose-bud a drop of dew
Gleamed like the tear in a nightingale's eye:
All its glitter was owing to the sun,
It was trembling in fear of the sun —
A restless sky born star
That had stopped for a moment, from desire
to be seen;
Oft deceived by bud and flower,
It had gained nothing from Life.
There it hung, ready to drop,
Like a tear on the eyelashes of a lover who
hath lost his heart.
The sorely distressed bird hopped under the
rose-bush,
The dewdrop trickled into his mouth.
O thou that wouldst deliver thy soul from
enemies.
I ask thee — "Art thou a drop of water or a
gem?"
When the bird melted in the fire of thirst,
It appropriated the life of another.
The drop was not solid and gem-like;
The diamond had a being, the drop had none.
Never for an instant neglect self-preservation:
Be a diamond, not a dewdrop!
Be massive in nature, like mountains,
And bear on thy crest a hundred clouds laden
with floods of rain!
Save thyself by affirmation of self,
Compress thy quick silver into silver ore!
Produce a melody from the string of self,
Make manifest the secrets of self!

Story of the diamond and the coal

Now I will open one more gate of Truth,
I will tell thee another tale.
The coal in the mine said to the diamond,
O thou entrusted with splendours eve lasting,
We are comrades, and our being is one;
The source of our existence is the same,
Yet while I die here in the anguish of
worthlessness,
Thou art set on the crowns of emperors.

My stuff is so vile that I am valued less than
earth,
Whereas the mirror's heart is rent by thy
beauty.
My darkness illumines the chafing dish,
Then my substance is incinerated at last.
Every one puts the sole of his foot on my head
And covers my stock of existence with ashes.
My fate must needs be deplored;
Dost thou know what is the gist of my being?
It is a condensed wavelet of smoke,
Endowed with a single spark;
Both in feature and nature thou art star-like,
Splendours rise from every side of thee.
Now thou become'st the light of a monarch's
eye,
Now thou adornest the haft of a dagger."
"O sagacious friend!" said the diamond,
"Dark earth, when hardened, becomes in
dignity as a bezel.
Having been at strife with its environment,
It is ripened by the struggle and grows hard
like a stone.
'Tis this ripeness that has endowed my form
with light
And filled my bosom with radiance.
Because thy being is immature, thou hast
become abased;
Because thy body is soft, thou art burnt.
Be void of fear, grief, and anxiety;
Be hard as a stone, be a diamond!
Whosoever strives hard and grips tight,
The two worlds are illumined by him.
A little earth is the origin of the Black Stone
Which puts forth its head in the Ka'bah:
Its rank is higher than Sinai,
It is kissed by the swarthy and the fair.
In solidity consists the glory of Life;
Weakness is worthlessness and immaturity."

*Story of the Shaykh and the Brahmin,
followed by a conversation between
Ganges and Himalaya to the effect that the
continuation of social life depends on firm
attachment to the characteristic traditions
of the community*

At Benares lived a venerable Brahmin,
Whose head was deep in the ocean of Being
and Not-being.
He had a large knowledge of philosophy
But was well-disposed to the seekers after
God.
His mind was eager to explore new problems,
His intellect moved on a level with the
Pleiades;
His nest was as high as that of the Anka;
Sun and moon were cast, like rue, on the
flame of his thought.
For a long time he laboured and sweated,
But philosophy brought no wine to his cup
Although he set many a snare in the gardens
of learning,
His snares never caught a glimpse of the Ideal
bird;
And notwithstanding that the nails of his
thought were dabbled with blood,
The knot of Being and Not-being remained
untied.
The sighs on his lips bore witness to his
despair,
His countenance told tales of his distraction.
One day he visited an excellent Shaykh,
A man who had in his breast a heart of gold.
The Brahmin laid the seal of silence on his lips
And lent his ear to the Sage's discourse.
Then said the Shaykh: "O wanderer in the
lofty sky!
Pledge thyself to be true, for a little, to the
earth;
Thou hast lost thy way in wildernesses of
speculation,
Thy fearless thought hath passed beyond
Heaven.
Be reconciled with earth, O sky-traveller!
Do not wander in quest of the essence of the
stars!

I do not bid thee abandon thine idols.
 Art thou an unbeliever? Then be worthy of
 the badge of unbelief!
 O inheritor of ancient culture,
 Turn not thy back on the path thy fathers
 trod;
 If a people's life is derived from unity,
 Unbelief too is source of unity.
 Thou that art not even a perfect infidel,
 Art unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit.
 We both are far astray from the road of
 devotion:
 Thou art far from Azar, and I from Abraham.
 Our Majnun hath not fallen into melancholy
 for his Layla's sake:
 He hath not become perfect in the madness of
 love.
 When the lamp of self expires,
 What is the use of heaven surveying
 imagination?"

Once on a time, laying hold of the skirt of the
 mountain,
 Ganges said to Himalaya:
 "O thou mantled in snow since the morn of
 creation,
 Thou whose form is girdled with streams,
 God made thee a partner in the secrets of
 heaven,
 But deprived thy foot of graceful gait.
 He took away from thee the power to walk:
 What avails this sublimity and stateliness?
 Life springs from perpetual movement:
 Motion constitutes the wave's whole
 existence,"

When the mountain heard this taunt from the
 river,
 He puffed angrily like a sea of fire,
 And answered: "Thy wide waters are my
 looking-glass;
 Within my bosom are a hundred rivers like
 thee.
 This graceful gait of thine is an instrument of
 death:
 Whoso goeth from self is meet to die.
 Thou hast no knowledge of thine own case,
 Thou exultest in thy misfortune: thou art a
 fool!

O born of the womb of the revolving sky,
 A fallen-in bank is better than thou!
 Thou hast made thine existence an offering to
 the ocean,
 Thou hast thrown the rich purse of thy life to
 the highway man.
 Be self-contained like the rose in the garden,
 Do not go to the florist in order to spread thy
 perfume!
 To live is to grow in thyself
 And gather roses from thine own flower-bed.
 Ages have gone by and my foot is fast in
 earth:
 Dost thou fancy that I am far from my goal?
 My being grew and reached the sky,
 The Pleiades sank to rest under my skirts;
 Thy being vanishes in the ocean,
 But on my crest the stars bow their heads.
 Mine eye sees the mysteries of heaven,
 Mine ear is familiar with angels' wings.
 Since I glowed with the heat of unceasing toil,
 I amassed rubies, diamonds, and other gems.
 I am stone within, and in the stone is fire:
 Water cannot pass over my fire!"

Art thou a drop of water? Do not break at
 thine own feet,
 But endeavour to surge and wrestle with the
 sea.
 Desire the water of a jewel, become a jewel!
 Be an ear-drop, adorn a beauty!
 Oh, expand thyself! Move swiftly!
 Be a cloud that shoots lightning and sheds a
 flood of rain!
 Let the ocean sue for thy storms as a beggar,
 Let it complain of the straitness of its skirts
 Let it deem itself less than a wave
 And glide along at thy feet!

*Showing that the purpose of the Muslim's
 life is to exalt the word of Allah, and that
 the jihad (war against unbelievers), if it be
 prompted by land-hunger, is unlawful in
 the religion of Islam*

Imbue thine heart With the tincture of Allah,
 Give honour and glory to Love!

The Muslim's nature prevails by means of
love:
The Muslim, if he be not loving, is an infidel.
Upon God depends his seeing and not-seeing,
His eating, drinking, and sleeping.
In his will that which God wills becomes lost—
"How small a man believe this saying?"
He encamps in the field of "*There is no god but
Allah;*"
In the world he is a witness to mankind.
His high estate is attested by the Prophet who
was sent to men and Jinn—
The most truthful of witnesses.
Leave words and seek that spiritual state,
Shed the light of God o'er the darkness of thy
deeds!
Albeit clad in kingly robe, live as a dervish,
Live wakeful and meditating on God!
Whatever thou dost, let it be thine aim therein
to draw nigh to God,
That his glory may be made manifest by thee.
Peace becomes an evil, if its object be aught
else;
War is good if its object is God.
If God be not exalted by our swords,
War dishonours the people.
The holy Shaykh Miyan Mir Wali,
By the light of whose soul every hidden thing
was revealed –
His feet were firmly planted on the path of
Muhammad,
He was a flute for the impassioned music of
love.
His tomb keeps our city safe from harm
And causes the beams of true religion to shine
on us.
Heaven stooped its brow to his threshold,
The Emperor of India was one of his disciples.
Now, this monarch had sown the seed of
ambition in his heart
And was resolved on conquest.
The flames of vain desire were alight in him,
He was teaching his sword to ask, "Is there
any more?"
In the Deccan was a great noise of war,
His army stood on the battle field.
He went to the Shaykh of heaven-high dignity
That he might receive his blessing:

The Muslim turns from this world to God
And strengthens policy with prayer.
The Shaykh made no answer to the Emperor's
speech,
The assembly of dervishes was all ears,
Until a disciple, in his hand a silver coin,
Opened his lips and broke the silence-,
Saying, "Accept this poor offering from me,
O guide of them that have lost the way to
God!
My limbs were bathed in sweat of labour
Before I put away a dirhem in my skirt."
The Shaykh said: "This money ought to be
given to our Sultan,
Who is a beggar wearing the raiment of a
king.
Though he holds sway over sun, moon and
stars,
Our Emperor is the most penniless of
mankind.
His eye is fixed on the table of strangers,
The fire of his hunger hath consumed a whole
world.
His sword is followed by famine and plague,
His building lays wide land waste.
The folk are crying out because of his
indigence,
His empty handedness causes him to plunder
the weak.
His power is an enemy to all:
Humankind are the caravan and he the
brigand.
In his self-delusion and ignorance
He calls pillage by the name of empire.
Both the royal troops and those of the enemy
Are cloven in twain by the sword of his
hunger.
The beggar's hunger consumes his own soul,
But the Sultan's hunger destroys state and
religion.
Whoso shall draw the sword for anything
except Allah,
His sword is sheathed in his own breast."

*Precepts written for the Muslims of India
by Mir Najat Nakshband, who is
generally known as Baba Sahrai*

O thou that hast grown from earth, like a rose,
Thou too art born of the womb of self!
Do not abandon self! Persist therein!
Be a drop of water and drink up the ocean
Glowing with the light of self as thou art,
Make self strong, and thou wilt endure.
Thou gett'st profit from the trade,
Thou gain'st riches by preserving this
commodity.
Thou art being, and art thou afraid of
not-being?
Dear friend, thy understanding is at fault.
Since I am acquainted with the harmony of
Life.,
I will tell thee what is the secret of Life –
To sink into thyself like the pearl,
Then to emerge from thine inward solitude;
To collect sparks beneath the ashes,
And become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.
Go, burn the house of forty years' tribulation,
Move round thyself! Be a circling flame!
What is Life but to be freed from moving
round others
And to regard thyself as the Holy Temple?
Beat thy wings and escape from the attraction
of Earth:
Like birds, be safe from falling.
Unless thou art a bird., thou wilt do wisely
Not to build thy nest on the top of a cave.
O thou that seekest to acquire knowledge,
I say o'er to thee the message of the Sage of
Rum:
"Knowledge, if it lie on thy skin, is a snake;
Knowledge, if thou take it to heart, is a
friend."
Hast thou heard how the Master of Rum
Gave lectures on philosophy at Aleppo? –
Fast in the bonds of intellectual proofs,
Drifting o'er the dark and stormy sea of
understanding;
A Moses unilluminated by Love's Sinai,
Ignorant of Love and of Love's passion.

He discoursed on Scepticism and
Neoplatonism,
And strung many a brilliant pearl of
metaphysics.
He unravelled the problems of the
Peripatetics,
The light of his thought made clear whatever
was obscure.
Heaps of books lay around and in front of
him,
And on his lips was the key to all their
mysteries.
Shams-i-Tabriz, directed by Kamal,
Sought his way to the college of Jalauddin
Rumi
And cried out, "What is all this noise and
babble?
What are all these syllogisms and judgements
and demonstrations?"
"Peace, O fool!" exclaimed the Maulvi,
"Do not laugh at the doctrines of the sages.
Get thee out of my college!
This is argument and discussion; what hast
thou to do with it?
My discourse is beyond thy understanding.
It brightens the glass of perception!
These words increased the anger of
Shams-i-Tabriz
And caused a fire to burst forth from his soul.
The lightning of his look fell on the earth,
And the glow of his breath made the dust
spring into flames.
The spiritual fire burned the intellectual stack
And clean consumed the library of the
philosopher.
The Maulvi, being a stranger to Love's
miracles
And unversed in Love's harmonies,
Cried, "How didst thou kindle this fire,
Which hath burned the books of the
philosophers?"
The Shaykh answered, "O unbelieving
Muslim,
This is vision and ecstasy: what hast thou to
do with it?
My state is beyond thy thought,
My flame is the Alchemist's elixir."

Thou hast drawn thy substance from the
 snow of philosophy,
 The cloud of thy thought sheds nothing but
 hailstones.
 Kindle a fire in thy rubble,
 Foster a flame in thy earth!
 The Muslim's knowledge is perfected by
 spiritual fervour,
 The meaning of Islam is Renounce what shall
 pass away.
 When Abraham escaped from the bondage of
 "that which sets,"
 He sat unhurt in the midst of flames.

Thou hast cast knowledge of God behind thee
 And squandered thy religion for the sake of a
 loaf.
 Thou art hot in pursuit of antimony,
 Thou art unaware of the blackness of thine
 own eye.
 Seek the Fountain of Life from the sword's
 edge,
 And the River of Paradise from the dragon's
 mouth,
 Demand the Black Stone from the door of the
 house of idols,
 And the musk-deer's bladder from a mad
 dog,
 But do not seek the glow of Love from the
 knowledge of today,
 Do not seek the nature of Truth from this
 infidel's cup!
 Long have I been running to and fro,
 Learning the secrets of the New Knowledge:
 Its gardeners have put me to the trial
 And have made me intimate with their roses.
 Roses! Tulips, rather, that warn one not to
 smell them –
 Like paper roses, a mirage of perfume.
 Since this garden ceased to enthrall me
 I have nested on the Paradisal tree.
 Modern knowledge is the greatest blind –
 Idol-worshipping, idol-selling, idol making!
 Shackled in the prison of phenomena,
 It has not overleaped the limits of the sensible.
 It has fallen down in crossing the bridge of
 Life,
 It has laid the knife to its own throat.

Its fire is cold as the flame of the tulip;
 Its flames are frozen like hail.
 Its nature remains untouched by the glow of
 Love,
 It is ever engaged in joyless search.
 Love is the Plato that heals the sicknesses of
 the mind.
 The mind's melancholy is cured by its lancet.
 The whole world bows in adoration to Love,
 Love is the Mahmud that conquers the
 Somnath of intellect.
 Modern science lacks this old wine in its cup,
 Its nights are not loud with passionate prayer.

Thou hast misprized thine own cypress
 And deemed tall the cypress of others.
 Like the reed, thou hast emptied thyself of self
 And given thine heart to the music of others.
 O thou that begg'st morsels from an other's
 table,
 Wilt thou seek thine own kind in another's
 shop?
 The Muslim's assembly-place is burned up by
 the lamps of strangers,
 His mosque is consumed by the sparks of
 monasticism.
 When the deer fled from the sacred territory
 of Makkah,
 The hunter's arrow pierced her side.
 The leaves of the rose are scattered like its
 scent:
 O thou that has fled from the self, come back
 to it!
 O trustee of the wisdom of the Quran,
 Find the lost unity again!
 We, who keep the gate of the citadel of Islam,
 Have become unbelievers by neglecting the
 watchword of Islam.
 The ancient Saki's bowl is shattered,
 The wine-party of the Hijaz is broken up.
 The Ka'ba is filled with our idols,
 Infidelity mocks at our Islam.
 Our Shaykh hath gambled Islam away for
 love of idols.
 And made a rosary of the *zunnar*.
 Our spiritual directors owe their rank to their
 white hairs

And are the laughing-stock of children in the street;
 Their hearts bear no impress of the Faith
 But house the idols of sensuality.
 Every long-haired fellow wears the garb of a dervish –
 Alas for these traffickers in religion!
 Day and night they are traveling about with disciples,
 Insensible to the great needs of Islam.
 Their eyes are without light, like the narcissus,
 Their breasts devoid of spiritual wealth.
 Preachers and Sufis, all worship worldliness alike;
 The prestige of the pure religion is ruined.
 Our preacher fixed his eyes on the pagoda
 And the mufti of the Faith sold his verdict.
 After this, O friends, what are we to do?
 Our guide turns his face towards the wine-house.

Time is a sword

Green be the holy grave of Shafi'i,
 Whose vine hath cheered a whole world!
 His thought plucked a star from heaven:
 He named time "a cutting sword."
 How shall I say what is the secret of this sword?
 In its flashing edge there is life.
 Its owner is exalted above hope and fear,
 His hand is whiter than the hand of Moses.
 At one stroke thereof water gushes from the rock
 And the sea becomes land from dearth of moisture.
 Moses held this sword in his hand,
 Therefore he wrought more than man may contrive.
 He clove the Red Sea asunder
 And made its waters like dry earth.
 The arm of Ali, the conqueror of Khaibar,
 Drew its strength from this same sword.
 The revolution of the sky is worth seeing,
 The change of day and night is worth observing.

Look, O thou enthralled by Yesterday and Tomorrow,
 Behold another world in thine own heart!
 Thou hast sown the seed of darkness in the clay,
 Thou hast imagined Time as a line:
 Thy thought measures length of Time
 With the measure of night and day.
 Thou mak'st this line a girdle on thine infidel waist;
 Thou art an advertiser of falsehood, like idols.
 Thou wert the Elixir, and thou hast become a Peck of dust;
 Thou wert born the conscience of Truth, and thou hast become a lie!
 Art thou a Muslim? Then cast off this girdle!
 Be a candle to the feast of the religion of the free!
 Knowing not the origin of Time,
 Thou art ignorant of everlasting Life.
 How long wilt thou be a thrall of night and day?
 Learn the mystery of Time from the words "I have a time with God."
 Phenomena arise from the march of Time,
 Life is one of Time's mysteries.
 The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun
 Time is everlasting, but the sun does not last for ever.
 Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast,
 Time is the secret of moonlight and sunlight.
 Thou hast extended Time, like Space,
 And distinguished Yesterday from Tomorrow.
 Thou hast fled, like a scent, from thine own garden;
 Thou hast made thy prison with thine own hand.
 Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end,
 Blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind.
 To know its root quickens the living with new life:
 Its being is more splendid than the dawn.
 Life is of Time, and Time is of Life:
 "Do not abuse Time!" was the command of the Prophet.

[Translated by A.R. Nicholson]

Now I will tell you a point of wisdom as
brilliant as a pearl,⁸
That you should realize the difference
between a slave and a free man!
A slave is lost in the magic of days and nights,
But Time, with all its expansion, is lost in the
heart of a free man!
A slave weaves the shroud for himself by his
times,
And covers himself with the sheet of days and
nights!
But a free man keeps himself above the earth
And attacks the world with all his might!
A slave is caught in the snare of days and
nights like a bird,
And the pleasure of flight is forbidden to his
soul!
But the quick-breathing breast of a free man
Becomes a cage for the Bird of Time!
To a slave, Nature is a meaningless word,
And there is nothing rare in the impressions
of his soul!
Owing to his heaviness and laziness his abode
is always the same,
And the cries of his morn and eve are always
the same!
But the attempt of a free man creates new
things every moment
And his string continuously produces new
tunes!
His nature is not obliged to any sort of
repetition,
Because his path is not like the circle caused
by compasses!
To a slave Time is but a chain,
And he always complains against the fate!
But the courage of a free man gives
instructions to his fate
And the great revolutions of the world are
caused by his powerful hand!
The past the future are dissolved in his preset

⁸ This stanza was added in a later edition of the original and hence it is not found in Nicholson's translation. We are using A.R. Tariq's translation of these lines but giving up his line-breaks for a smoother reading of each couplet.

And all the delayed plans are observed by his
quick action!
These words of mine are beyond sound,
beyond discussion,
For their meaning can't be understood easily!
Although I have expressed my views about
Time yet my shallow words are ashamed of
the meaning;—
And the meaning itself has a complaint:
"What have I to do with the words?"
In fact, a living meaning when expressed in
words, dies out;
Your very breaths extinguish its fire!
Nevertheless, the point of Absence and
Presence is in the depth of our heart;
The mystery of Time and its motion is in the
depth of our heart!
The musical instrument of Time has its own
silent tunes:
Oh, dive deep into your heart that you may
realize the secret of Time!

[Translated by A.R. Tariq]

Oh, the memory of those days when Time's
sword
Was allied with the strength of our hands!
We sowed the seed of religion in men's hearts
And unveiled the face of Truth;
Our nails tore loose the knot of this world,
Our bowing in prayer gave blessings to the
earth.
From the jar of Truth we made rosy wine
gush forth,
We charged against the ancient taverns.
O thou in whose cup is old wine,
A wine so hot that the glass is well nigh
turned to water,
Wilt thou in thy pride and arrogance and
self-conceit
Taunt us with our emptiness?
Our cup, too, hath graced the symposium
Our breast hath owned a spirit.
The new age with all its glories
Hath risen from the dust of our feet.
Our blood hath watered God's harvest,
All worshippers of God are our debtors.
The *takbir* was our gift to the world,
Ka'bas were built of our clay.

By means of us God taught the Koran,
 From our hand He dispensed His bounty.
 Although crown and signet have passed from
 us,
 Do not look with contempt on our
 beggarliness!
 In thine eyes we are good for nothing,
 Thinking old thoughts, despicable.
 We have honour from "*There is no god but
 Allah,*"
 We are the protectors of the universe.
 Freed from the vexation of to-day and to-
 morrow,
 We have pledged ourselves to love One.
 We are the conscience hidden in God's heart,
 We are the heirs of Moses and Aaron.
 Sun and moon are still bright with our
 radiance,
 Lightning-flashes still lurk in our cloud.
 In our essence Divinity is mirrored:
 The Muslim's being is one of the signs of God.

An invocation

O thou that art as the soul in the body of the
 universe,
 Thou art our soul and thou art ever fleeing
 from us.
 Thou breakest music into Life's lute;
 Life envies Death when death is for thy sake.
 Once more bring comfort to our sad hearts,
 Once more dwell in our breasts!
 Once more demand from us the sacrifice of
 name and fame,
 Strengthen our weak love.
 We are oft complaining of destiny,
 Thou art of great price and we have naught.
 Hide not thy fair face from the empty handed!
 Sell cheap the love of Salman and Bilal!
 Give us the sleepless eye and the passionate
 heart,
 Give us again the nature of quick silver!
 Show unto us one of thy manifest signs,
 That the necks of our enemies may be bowed!
 Make this chaff a mountain crested with fire,
 Burn with out fire all that is not God!
 When the people of Islam let the thread of
 Unity go from their hands,

They fell into a hundred mazes.
 We are dispersed like stars in the world;
 Though of the same family, we are strange to
 one another.
 Bind again these scattered leaves,
 Revive the law of love!
 Take us back to serve thee as of old,
 Commit thy cause to them that love thee!
 We are travellers: give us resignation as our
 goal!
 Give us the strong faith of Abraham!
 Make us know the meaning of "*There is no
 god,*"
 Make us acquainted with the mystery of
 "*except Allah*"!

I who burn like a candle for the sake of others
 Teach myself to weep like that candle.
 O God! a tear that is heart-enkindling,
 Passionful, wrung forth by pain, peace
 consuming,
 May I sow in the garden, and may it grow
 into a fire
 That washes away the fire-brand from the
 tulip's robe!
 My heart is with yester-eve, my eye is on
 to-morrow:
 Amidst the company I am alone.
 "Every one fancies he is my friend,
 But none ever sought the secrets within my
 soul."
 Oh, where in the wide world is my comrade?
 I am the Bush of Sinai: where is my Moses?
 I am tyrannous, I have done many a wrong to
 myself,
 I have nourished a flame in my bosom,
 A flame that burnt to ashes the wares of
 understanding,
 Cast fire on the skirt of discretion,
 Lessened with madness the proud reason,
 And inflamed the very being of knowledge:
 Its blaze enthrones the sun in the sky
 And lightnings encircle it with adoration for
 ever.
 Mine eye fell to weeping, like dew,
 Since I was entrusted with that hidden fire.
 I taught the candle to burn openly,

While I myself burned unseen by the world's
 eye.
 As last flames burst forth from every hair of
 me,
 Fire dropped from the veins of my thought:
 My nightingale picked up the grains of spark
 And created a fire-tempered song.
 The breast of this age is without a heart,
 Majnun quivers with pain because Layla's
 howdah is empty.
 It is not easy for the candle to throb alone:
 Ah, is there no moth worthy of me?
 How long shall I wait for one to share my
 grief?
 How long must I search for a confidant?
 O Thou whose face lends light to the moon
 and the stars,
 Withdraw Thy fire from the soul!
 Take back what Thou hast put in my breast,
 Remove the stabbing radiance from my
 mirror,
 Or give me one old comrade
 To be the mirror of mine all-burning love!
 In the sea wave tosses side by side with wave:
 Each hath a partner in its emotion.
 In heaven star consorts with star,

And the bright moon lays her head on the
 knees of Night.
 Morning touches Night's dark side,
 And To-day throws itself against To-morrow.
 One river loses its being in another,
 A waft of air dies in perfume.
 There is dancing in every nook of the
 wilderness,
 Madman dances with madman.
 Because in thine essence Thou art single,
 Thou hast evolved for Thyself a whole world.
 I am as the tulip of the field,
 In the midst of a company I am alone.
 I beg of Thy grace a sympathising friend,
 And adept in the mysteries of my nature,
 A friend endowed with madness and
 wisdom,
 One that knoweth not the phantom of vain
 things,
 That I may confide my lament to his soul
 And see again my face in his heart.
 His image I will mould of mine own clay,
 I will be to him both idol and worshipper.

[Translated by R. A. Nicholson]